C 8705 by Edward Meredith STC M 1781 Bodl. K. O/H/E/ JT/MH

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LETTER

Desiring Information of the

CONFERENCE

At the *D.* of *P.* mention'd in the Letter to Mr. *G.*

SIR,

I Know not what to make of the Letter to Mr. *G.* On the one side it charges him with Disingenuity, for *giving out false and imperfect Copies* of a late Conference; and on the other confesses, That *Mr. M. pretends the D. gave out false Copies* too. And Mr. *M.* I am told, is a *Man of Learning and Integrity*, as well as the *D.'s* Copist, *and was present at the whole Conference, and very well understood the whole Matter.* Mr. *G.* is one with whom I have my self some Acquaintance, and whom I know not to be so weak as the slighting Hints of the Letter would make him, tho' I do not think him strong enough to make an Argument Scorn-proof: For to laugh off an Argument which becomes importunate, and will not take a civil Answer, is a sure way, and which I have known practis'd. Those who know him better, think there is not an honester Man in the Nation; and that if he have wrong'd the *D.* 'tis the first Wrong he did in his Life. The *D.* is a Man in Dignity, and than whom no body knows better what 'tis to defame his Neighbor, and post him up in Print for a Fool and a Knave: For that's the plain, tho' not the blunt English of *Weak* and *Disingenuous.* What must I think of this matter? Has the *D.* forgot himself? Or is Mr. *G.* in so short a time become another Man, one who went into the Conference Honest and Able, and came out a disingenuous Dunce?

This matter might, in my Opinion, have been better carry'd. Mr. *G's* Copies were given out, and came, I ſuppoſe, to the *D's* Hands while he was yet in Town, and might have been told what was falſe or imperfect in them, and made Satisfaction, if he had done any body Wrong. And I cannot comprehend why he was let alone, as long as he might have Anſwer'd for himſelf, and Poſted as ſoon as he was got a Hundred and fifty Miles off. Again, the *Original Paper*, which the Letter ſays was *Read aloud and approv'd by both Parties*, might have been publiſh'd, and all farther trouble ſav'd. A Copy agreed by both Sides would have put the Matter of Fact paſt Fending and Proving. By the way, in whoſe Hands do's this Original Paper remain? I ſuppoſe not in Mr. *G's*, becauſe the Letter, inſtead of talking of the Unauthentic Papers of his Writer, would in likelihood have complain'd of corrupting the Original. If it remain with the *D.* certainly Diſingenuity is a thing with which Mr. *G.* is unacquainted: For thoſe who are given to play Tricks, are ſuſpicious, and ſtand upon their Guard, and provide before-hand not to be caught. We may be ſure Mr. *G.* never dreamt of playing the *D.* foul, if he left in the *D's* Hands wherewith to be convinc'd of foul Play.

But yet the Letter will needs have him Diſingenuous, becauſe *when the Papers of the Gentleman who writ for him, were neither Read, nor Compar'd, nor Sign'd as they ought to have been, with what Ingenuity can theſe be diſperſed through ſo many Hands for true and authentic Copies?* Pray where is the Diſingenuity of diſperſing them for true, if they be true, and why are they the leſs true for not being formally Authentic? I for my part think, that no Reading, nor Comparing, nor Signing will make a thing true which is not, nor hinder a thing from being true which is. Yes; but *they muſt be of very eaſie Faith and Underſtanding, who would take his Word in this Matter, without ſo much as any Motive of Credibility.* That is to ſay, he is a Fool who believes a Catholic upon his Word; a Complement which if Catholics ſhould return, we ſhould have comfortable living together. But the *D.* miſtakes his Man, and knows not how great a Motive of Credibility Mr. *G's* Word is, and how many Proteſtant Fools there are, if they be ſo who take his Word, than which no body, I believe, who knows him, will deſire more Aſſurance in any Matter of Fact.

But Mr. *G.* makes the *D.* barely put a Queſtion about the *Greek* Church, *but mentions not the inference he drew from it, which is ſet down in the Original Paper approved by both Parties.* And if it were no other, than *that*, which is ſet down in the Letter, viz. *Then a Church holding to Tradition as its Rule, may err in matters of Faith*, I for

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my part do not ſee what neceſſity there was at all of ſetting it down, the Inference being ſo evident from the Premiſes, that every one that runs, might read it.

So that upon the whole, methinks here is much ado about nothing. And then for the two things which the *D.* deſires Mr. *G.* to make out, commend me to him for a man who loves to ſpare his own pains. 'Tis as much as to ſay, do you do all the work, and I will ſit by, and tell you whether it be well done or no, muſt Mr. *G.* prove *that Proteſtants have no abſolute certainty?* I thought it had concern'd them to be ſatisfied that they have. For ſome ſecurity ſure would not be amiſs for Souls, as well as for Mony. I thought it had concern'd the *D.* as well as his Neighbors, to have an account of the hope which is in him, ready for all who ask it. He teaches Proteſtant Doctrin, and (if I miſtake him not) owns an abſolute certainty. Has he then nothing to do with making it appear that he is ſure of what he teaches, and what he owns; But deſire not to be troubled for that matter, and bid Mr. *G.* prove the contrary? I take no notice that the Queſtion is veered from certainty of Proteſtant Doctrin to certainty of Scripture, as if it were all one to be certain of the Book, and certain of every thing for which 'tis quoted. Such matters I leave to thoſe who are or will be concern'd; but I think it not equal by any means that one ſide ſhould make all the Play.

I take the Second Propoſal for the fairer of the two, and wiſh they would ſhare it between them; Mr. *G.* anſwer the *D.*'s objection, and the *D.* Mr. *G.*'s Argument. The *D.* is too much a Scholar not to know he has not anſwer'd it yet, becauſe he knows an Argument is not anſwered, till ſome Propoſition in it be found falſe; ſome Term taken in a double ſenſe, or ill coupled with his fellow; in fine, till ſome fault be diſcovered. He meddles with nothing of this, but lets the Premiſes alone, and brings an objection againſt the Concluſion; a thing which may be done, and very ſpecioully, and very croſly againſt as undeniable Truths as any in the World. For when will there want ſomething to ſay, and more than can eaſily be anſwered, againſt the diviſion of an Inch into as many parts, as an Ell? Or the moving of two Points towards one another perpetually, which notwithſtanding ſhall never meet? And yet both are palpably demonſtrable. Now as the *D.* ſays to Mr. *G.* anſwer my Objection, or elſe your Argument muſt be faulty; Mr. *G.* may ſay to the *D.* anſwer my Argument or elſe there muſt be a fault in your Objection: And as this is equally forcible on both ſides, they are debtors to one another. I ſuppoſe they will come to account, and let us, who ſtand by, know at laſt

where

where to venture our Souls; with the Protestant Certainty, or Catholic Infallibility.

For the rest, because I should be sorry to wrong either the *D.* or Mr. *G.* by my judgment, I pray you to get me information of the matter of fact, such as I may relie upon. Particularly what *the great care* was *which Mr.* G. *took in the Conference it self, to keep the* D. *from expecting any great ingenuity from him after it*: What there is *false, or imperfect in his Copies*: How it hapned that the Gentleman who writ for him, *never read his Papers at the Conclusion*: How the Copies given out by Mr. *G.* come to omit what *is set down in the Original Paper read aloud and approved by both Parties*: What *Arts have been used to get Mr.* T. *to approve his Copy*: And above all, why the *D.* did not Print the *Original Paper*, which he says, was *read aloud, and approved by both Parties*, and which remained only in his own hands, that so the World, without more ado might have been satisfied of the mighty difference between it and Mr. *G*'s Copy? In fine, to say all in a word, procure me, if you can, a true account of the late Conference at the *D.* of *P.* For thô the title of the Letter promise one, I find no performance in the body, and remain as ignorant of what past, as before I read it.

Martii 22. 1687. *I am*

Yours, &c.

The Printer to the Reader.

BEfore this Letter came to my hands, there was another in the Press, which gives that farther account of the Conference, which is desired by this, being written by one who was present at it, so that (thô' it were not written on any hint from this Letter) it may serve for an Answer hereunto, and at the same time give the World a true and full account, of what hath made so great a noise in it. And it will be public within three or four days at farthest.

Publisht with Allowance.

London, Printed by Henry Hills, *Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, for his Houshold and Chappel. And are to be sold at his Printing-house in* Black-fryers, *on the Ditch-side; the* Kings Arms *being over the Door*, 1687.